

Maj. Gen. Sanchez

assumes command of 1AD

Story by Pvt. Benjamin Z. Etzioni, 1st Armored Division PAO



Photo by Spc. Roderick A. Berry

Maj. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez receives the colors and command of the 1st Armored Division from Lt. Gen. James C. Riley, V Corps commander. The ceremony was the first major event hosted by the division at its new headquarters, July 10.

WIESBADEN, Germany – With the sun shining bright, artillery cannons rendering honors and “Auf Wiedersehen,” and the “Iron Soldiers March” echoing through the crowd of more than 250, Maj. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez assumed command of the 1st Armored Division from Maj. Gen. George W. Casey Jr., during a ceremony at Wiesbaden Army Air Field, July 10.

The ceremony was the first major event hosted by the division at its new headquarters. Army leaders from throughout Germany attended the ceremony along with German dignitaries from Bad Kreuznach and Wiesbaden. In assuming command, Sanchez stressed his commitment to his soldiers.

“Iron Soldiers, I am totally committed to making you successful and to taking care of soldiers and their families,” said Sanchez. “Together, we will sustain the values, the training excellence and the focus on people and warfighting that has created this great Army and, more specifically, this great division.”

The ceremony marked the end of Casey’s two-year command. During his tenure, two brigades deployed to Kosovo and the division participated in several major exercises.

“Troops, it is time for this old infantryman to go and figure out how to be a joint warfighter,”

said Casey. “It has been my great honor to be an Iron Soldier. It has been my greatest privilege to lead you.”

Casey’s next assignment is commander of the Joint Warfighting Center in Suffolk, Va.

Sanchez came to the division from Headquarters, U. S. Army, Europe, where he served as the deputy chief of staff for operations. He previously served as the assistant division commander for support for the 1st Infantry Division and commander of Task Force Falcon from December 1999 through June 2000.

Sanchez was the Distinguished Military Graduate of Texas A&I University, Kingsville, Texas. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1973.

Sanchez holds a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics and history from Texas A&I University and a Master of Science degree in operations research and systems analysis engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School.

During the ceremony, the new division commander said he was thankful for the opportunity to command.

“Anytime a soldier is given the responsibilities of command, he rejoices,” said Sanchez. “To the Army leadership, and specifically Gen. [Montgomery] Meigs and Lt. Gen. [James] Riley, thank you for the vote of confidence and the opportunity to lead America’s Tank

Division and America’s sons and daughters.”

Sanchez is not a stranger to the 1st Armored Division, having previously commanded the division’s 3rd Brigade at Fort Riley, Kansas. At the ceremony, Riley welcomed Sanchez back to the division.

“[Sanchez] is an experienced leader and a great trainer,” said Riley. “He is a skilled warrior with tremendous experience at the joint- and combined-service level and as a commander of Task Force Falcon in Kosovo. Welcome back to the Victory Corps, to the ‘Old Ironsides’ and to a great community. We are proud to have you.”

In his speech, Sanchez discussed his outlook on the division’s future.

“As we look into the future, our challenge will be to sustain the standards of excellence set by Maj. Gen. Casey in training, operational execution and taking care of soldiers,” Sanchez said. “Maintaining our high-intensity conflict warfighting readiness will be our top priority. We must never lose sight of why we exist – to be able to immediately deploy and fight anywhere, anytime, across the spectrum of conflict.”

In assuming command, Sanchez became the 46th division commander.



Photo by Pvt. Benjamin Z. Etzioni

The reviewing party, Maj. Gen. George W. Casey Jr., outgoing IAD commanding general; Lt. Gen. James C. Riley, V Corps commander; Maj. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez, incoming IAD commanding general; and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael D. Bush, IAD Command Sergeant Major, inspect the troops during the change of command ceremony.